

A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

BRITISH NATION.

Thursday, January 29. 1708.

THere's no way of talking to you good People; I mean in order to Conviction, like Demonstration, nor will any Demonstrations, *such is the Tward Current of our Times*, affect you, but such as may be brought home to every Man's Door, that may be seen as it were without Eyes, and that when it is read, must strike a true Unison upon the Understanding of every Hearer. Well, since it must be so, such Demonstration you shall have.

Why must this Prohibition of *India Goods* be so advantageous to us, says a knot of Objectioners to me, that have been these two or three Years biting this Thong, that has strangled their private Gain, and who repine at losing their particular Profit, tho' they enjoy'd it at the Price of Starving the Nation? Why, say they, must it be so

very advantageous now, more than formerly; we had Manufactures before, and our Poor had Employment before, and why must they make such a Clamour now, more than ever?

This is the reason, why I say we must lay aside Argument, and come directly to Demonstrations and Matters of Fact; it is true, that from the Restoration of King *Charles II.* to the Revolution, in which time, all kinds of Indian, French, and Italian wrought Silks were freely imported; we had still our own Manufactures going on, and our Poor were tolerably well employ'd.

And tho' there are great Objections, which would fairly lie against the Particulars, yet I choose to grant, for the sake of the Argument, all that our Opposers allege,

edge, the easier to come at, and the stronger to enforce the great thing I am pursuing, call'd *Demonstration*.

Let the Gentlemen then come to Particulars, and compare the quantity of *Indian Goods Imported*, in the Years before the Revolution, and the Quantity Imported from the Revolution to the Prohibition, and they will find the Proportion beyond all Supposition; and speaking of the particular sorts prohibited, such as Damasks, Chints, Pelongs, stained Callicoes, Handkerchiefs, and other Silks, they stand in the Books plainly to be seen, regarding one another thus, some as 126 to 2540; others, as 23 to 315; others, as 15 to 709; and again, as 1 to 200; the numbers of Ships going to the *Indies*, advanc'd from 2 or 3, and sometimes but 1 in a Year, sometimes 3 in two Year, to 57 Ships sent out in 11 Months, or a little more, and to Fleets of 6, 9 and 11 Ships coming home together; the *Taxistock* in her first Voyage, brought home 9700 and some odd pieces of rich Damasks, and above 200000 pieces of Silks and Callicoes of several kinds, that directly Rival'd our own Manufactures.

These are Demonstrations, and tho' they are but few, of the many I might bring, and of more I purpose to bring in this Argument, yet these may serve to satisfy any reasonable Man, that tho' the *East India* and *French* Trades were in being in those days, and in their Proportion did freighten us in our Manufactures, yet the Grievance was young, the degree of it small; and the People who did not naturally delight in complaining, were not alarm'd with a general Destruction as they were afterward, when the encrease of those Goods, and the surprizing turn of the general fancy of the Nation to those Goods, as a Fashion, shew'd it fall like a Flood, that should drown and bear before it our whole Manufacture, and like the Locusts of *Egypt* devour every pleasant thing.

If you see in your Weekly Bills, 40 or 50, or sometimes 100 per Week dye of the Feavour, nay, if 7 or 8, or 10 are put in of the Spotted Feaver, the Politick Word for the Plague; you cry it is a Sickly Time;

or so; but if 30 or 40 a Week should fall of the Plague, and Families be infected with it; this alarms the Town, the Rich flee into the Country, the Poor run to Church to the Prayers, that perhaps never gave God Almighty that trouble for some Years before; and the Magistrates shut up Houses, and Exercise their Authority, to prevent the Mischief proving Universal.

Upon the Frontiers, if a few Moreders or Scraglers rove abroad to steal Poultry, and pick up what they can get; the little Towns are not very uneasie, and their common Watch is their security; but if large Detachments of the Enemy appear, or the Armies are advancing, they take the alarm all over the Country; away they run to the Fortified Towns, and remove their best Effects, or get Safeguards on paying large Contributions.

I need not explain these Similies, I hope, they are apposite and just; the *India Trade* in the Days of the late King *Charles* and King *James*, did indeed make little Invasions upon our Trade; it had its ill Consequences upon our Manufactures, and as far as it went, without doubt, the Damage had its Proportion; but the Wound was small, the Grief insensible, and it was not felt so, as to give us any concern; besides, we in *England* are not over apt to apply preventive Physick, or regard the mischiefs we see only, till we feel them; and thus this Distemper, like a slow Feavour, grew upon us, till it began to affect the Vitals of our Trade; and then we grew light headed, fell into Convulsions, and had gone stark mad, had not the Physicians of the State, I mean the Parliament, apply'd the only Specifick, and by at once removing the Cause, put a full stop to the Effects, which were come to that height, that I may, modestly say, border'd very near upon the Incurable, and would have proved Mortal to our Trade, if it had gone but a little farther.

If any one pretend to enquire, wherein they proved Injurious to our Manufactures, and alledge, they only invaded our *French* and *Italian Trade*, from whence we, before that,

that, imported a vast quantity of wrought Silks.

This is so well known to every body that wears Cloths, especially the Ladies, that it would be needless to enquire into the Particulars; only this may be said, and this is one Reason, why I have all along named the French Trade, (viz.) they were both equally and in Proportion grievous to our Trade, I mean still our Manufactures; they both interfered with our poor Peoples Em-

ployment at home, and both were paid for by our ready Money abroad; and these things I hope may be called Demonstrations, if not, I'll promise you some that shall be acknowledged for such, in my next; when I shall come to show you the plain Consequences of this Flux of *India* Goods upon us, and how it visibly sunk our Manufactures, ruin'd our Tradesmen, scatter'd our Poor, sunk our Rents, and depopulated our Towns.

MISCELLANEA.

THIS Affair of the East-India Trade is a weighty and a large Subject, and I purpose to go thro' it with as little interruption as possible; yet I know the aversion of our Paper Readers to a long Story, and therefore I must relieve a small part of this Work, to divert them with the usual Variety—And indeed I am pleas'd in it here, by the importunity of our Ridle-Mongers.

To divert the World, I bestow'd an Enigma upon you, and at my own Expence a small Prize to the Person that resolv'd it—Now after one Gentleman had hit upon it, here comes several more with their Guesses of the same Nature, and some nearer than others, but two claim to have been exactly the same, and these both claim the Prize too and will have it; that by the Words *any Person*, mention'd in the Proposal, I was oblig'd to give the same Prize to every body that guess'd the Meaning; and from one of these Objectors, as I suppose, I receiv'd the following Letter.

SIR,

YOU are desir'd to give your Opinion of the following Case in the next Paper.

A Sea Captain put forth a Declaration in these Words—That any Person able to Serve Her Majesty, that shall Voluntarily enter within 8 Days, to serve on Board the Ship he Commands, shall receive a Reward of 2 l. 4 s.

upon this, 4 or 500 enter themselves within the time; and claim the Reward respectively; but the Captain refuses to give it to any, but the first that enter'd himself; and says any Person that enters, is not every Person enter'd; that tho' they answer'd his Design in coming on Board, yet he never design'd to reward every Person that should so do.

Q. 1. Whether the Words any Person, will not comprehend every Person, that so did wish in the time limited?

Q. 2. Why may not the 2d, 3d, 4th or 5th Person, be any Person, as well as the first that enter'd?

I am very far from being afraid to publish this Letter, I mean as to the Case in hand, and my Answer shall be very plain and direct; It is true, for ought I know, that if such a Proclamation were publish'd, People might understand that every Person, &c. should have the Queen's Bounty; but let me tell my Objector, they would understand it so from the Nature of the Thing, not from the Words; and for this I appeal to the common way of our Wording Publick Ads—Where to make it general the very Word *any Person* being taken for Singular, is made Plural by the addition of the Words, or Persons—And so in our Acts of Parliament, *any Person* or Persons, if then any Person signify'd every Person, he rest would be Nonsense, and the whole Parliament be brought in for the Absurdity;